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TWO OTHER

DIALOGUES

TOUCHING

THE NATURE OF MAN.

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DIALOGUE VII.

I afterwards, however, in reflecting on our former conversations, felt dissatisfied with my friend's sketch of human powers, conceiving it to leave an individual too much *to himself*, and to ascribe an independence to the human energies totally inconsistent with facts observable in daily life.———Why, have you not been conscious—was my address to him when we next met—that we have never taken account of the accidents and relations of political and domestic life—never once alluded to what is often considered paramount in value; I mean, the honors and emoluments of the world or the endearment of love and friendship. ———But to be sure, my good fellow, he replied, you could not think our various δυνάμεις were for a moment imagined capable of improvement (not to say perfection) *alone;* surely neither body, heart, nor head can work without external aid, without objects to work upon, without fellow labourers to sympathize, to contrive, to execute for mutual advantage; various resources are requisite even to one energy of the human soul, and variously again must these be multiplied, in order to the completion of any scheme of action, or to the

proceeding through any the shortest period of moral being—this admitted, you must see that, whether in natural or in spiritual life, a supply (χορηγία) both material and mental must be a presupposed condition of our Dynamic advancements. ———I see it, and the more nearly any disposition shall approximate to its highest excellence, so much the greater must have been its outward resources, whether in things or in persons.——— And yet not so, I fancy, without considerable limitations; for first, their quantity is less to be regarded than their quality—again, no little importance lies in their mutual adaptation and their meetness, for the subject possessing them; further, while it *is* true that the highest possible increase of power must coexist only with the highest possible previous exercise of it, and consequently with the largest possible quantum of resources; it is *not* therefore true that to the advance, as to external aids or relations, is the improvement in faculty or in use, (either of necessity or for the most part) exactly proportionate.———And how may this be—would not such an adjustment have appeared fit?———Perhaps it might so, prima facie—if you are disposed to acquiesce with Divine indications of Will, it is enough to look within and around you, and contemplate with what disproportion the advantages of virtue and those of attachment are often bestowed, and how continually persons gifted

by fortune prove deficient in religious graces—such, then, seems to be the ordinance—if, on the contrary, you must have a *reason* for these phænomena, observe the effect in its progression, and acknowledge a Merciful Hand directing the eye of faith, *from* surrounding matter, *through* intermediate mind, up to an unseen world of spirit—while it is thus rendered evident that "the fashion of this world passeth away," and that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong"—nor would it be consistent that, admitting the incapability of consummation that attaches to every earthly energy, and admitting the very intimate connection that exists between man and matter, between self and others, we should fail to admit the further incompleteness ever waiting on this their connection.———And may I presume to hint to you, that to give an overwhelming weight of importance to external things and persons, would be to detract from personal responsibility and especially from the intrinsic excellence inhering in the mental resolution or *act in will.*———A very good remark, but not a new one—purpose, or προαίρεσις, is the very essence of a moral operation. So much premised, perhaps I may safely now propound to you my distinctions as to the external δυνάμεις of humanity, but you are tired for the present of my dry prose.

DIALOGUE VIII.

He came, as I expected, very soon after this, with a tabular arrangement in his hand—it ran thus:

POWERS.	Internal.	Body, for corporeal life.	Moral life.
		Mind, for mental life.	
	External.	Matter, for corporeal life.	Social or
		Mind, for mental life.	Political life.

All that is extrinsic to us, my friend resumed, either is capable of will and purpose, or is not. Man cannot exist corporeally, cannot energize in the life of nutrition and growth, cannot, in fact, vegetate, without *food*, or matter so constituted as to supply and support his body—so neither can he exist mentally, he cannot use his faculties of sensation, intellect, will, without suitable food for *them*, without objects sensible, intelligible, inviting either selection or its contrary. Now such objects must belong either to the class endued with rational will or to that which is destitute of it—the mass of things external in as far as they come within the influence of any individual and have *not* this power, is nearly comprised under the word *wealth*, viz: whatever can procure food, clothing, shelter, &c. and connected with this (and frequently, in some degree, proportionate to it) is the mass of mind,

external to him which is yet, somehow, united with him; we call these various wills, however related to this one will, in which they are, so far, concentrated, his *friends*.———But surely you are using the term too widely, you mean his dependants, his connections, his party.———Well, you see the idea, *I must implore a lenient criticism of the word*. Friends are of many kinds, first, *native*—parents, brethren (of both sexes), and other kinsfolk; secondly, *acquired*—and that either by the bonds of love and matrimony, or by the ties of such attachment as is commonly called friendship; and this again admits of various degrees, whereof the highest and the lowest, so wide is the separation between them, appear to form distinct kinds. Now inversely to the degree of attachment is the degree of amalgamation with wealth of which such relations may admit; that is, of amalgamation with external matter, which as you remember forms the other branch of our outward or secondary capabilities.—I have not forgotten; but where am I to place rank, honor, nobility, and other such advantages? they are goods, and goods external, and seem to consist both in money and in what you term friendship. ———Surely they do consist in both, and are indeed cases of the very amalgamation I was speaking of; for as in every thing human, so particularly in social life, perfection is unattainable—and it may

be, by the way, that the two or three couples so notorious in history, for disinterested friendship, are rarely imitated now, and that, even when such instances occur, we are reminded at the same time of the limitedness of man, in that his most engaging virtue loses its very nature, by being applied to one individual, rather than to the whole species of humanity, so that charity concentrated to one is so far charity no longer.———Is all refined and exalted affection, then, ideal? Cannot love be pure, or friendship otherwise than selfish? ———You quite mistake me; I would say that the fact of love or attachment being perfected (if at all) only toward one object at the same time, proves indisputably the finiteness as well as the dependence of the human spirit. Universality is not for man—infinity is scarcely less his attribute than independence—he *must* have friends while he can have but very few properly such, and perhaps not more than one entirely such.———I must catechize you a little more. On these relations to things external are built social virtues; particularly,* *Charity* and *Self government*, (these

* φιλία (Eth. Nic. lib. 4.) and σωφροσύνη—Aristotle had a very inadequate idea, it seems, of φιλία as a virtue—but perhaps the φιλία of the 8th and 9th books would require only to be gradually extended to become "brotherly love" and then "charity." To these two main virtues add one more, thus:

εὐσέβεια, Veneration regulated by } Wisdom { Duty to God.
φιλία, Benevolence regulated by } Wisdom { Duty to neighbours.
σωφροσύνη, Self-love regulated by } Wisdom { Duty to oneself.

on this last see note C.

two including justice, benevolence, beneficence, forgivingness, patience, fortitude, temperance, chastity, meekness, and many others—) external δυνάμεις evidently do become ἕξεις; yet surely, when engrafted on the spiritualized character, these things external are to depart entirely before the spirit receive its consummation.———I fancy not; matter *may* be lost to us hereafter, though on this point we now know nothing, but the modes in which we have adapted it to ourselves are neither forgotten nor fallen away—dispositions are formed, and forms emanating in some sense from external objects are constantly inhibited to the alteration of the moral spirit—and this even of matter is true—but the relations formed by us with other *minds*, may be so constituted as to last for ever in a higher sense—the persons may themselves meet again—imperfect friendships may become perfect—exclusive attachments be rendered universal, while the virtues of self government shall have perhaps rather a negative existence than an actual—the grace of mutual love, disinterested, unalloyed, forms, together with * worship, the employment and the enjoyment of Heaven.———Then, I presume, your aim has been to shew me that not only internal powers, but outward means—talents, that is, of all denominations, are requisite in their

* See note D.

measure to the accomplishment of energies, to the formation of habits, spiritual no less than natural—not only for the convenient passages through this world, but for the happy abiding in another. ———I am glad you see this—and you will not now fail to know (and to use the knowledge) that *as* each power, be it passive or active, is employed at every successive moment, in inhibiting and exhibiting either good or evil—*so* is its usefulness either increased or decreased, its nature improved or perverted, its advancement forward or retrograde. ———You have schooled me long enough—*οὐ γνῶσις ἀλλὰ πρᾶξις* is my motto—many thanks to you, but I am almost weary of so much intellectual inhibition.

NOTES.

NOTE A.

When powers are said to be in some sense incapable of perfection, a distinction is intended to be drawn between habits complete and habits incomplete—a human character is always compounded of dispositions of the latter class, which though in itself inferior to the former is indeed alone adapted to a life of probation and improvement. All human capabilities (we may almost venture to assert) admit theoretically, nay are so constituted as eventually to attain unto, consummation in their highest excellence—but *not except* under favorable circumstances. Now the circumstances of sublunary existence *are* eminently such, (even in the one-sided view man takes,) but *so far* only and not farther—they favor progression to such a point, we know not to what point, and there, wherever it be, man falls short of being perfect, and thus, and then, and therefore, he is translated to another sphere, in which, whether he still advance or not, whether or not he be *at once* endowed with the supremely improved qualities which his aspirations seem to wish for, we do not know nor must enquire—this is a hidden mystery—enough it is to be aware that we cannot improve too much, and that there is no degree of excellence for us, *while we are here*, beyond which it cannot be known and felt that there are other stages of advancement.

NOTE B.

The test of any operation of mind or body being consistent with its proper power, and consequently of its

forming a link, connecting the first infancy of human nature with its ultimate full stature of manhood, the test of this, as it is generally, and with a following limitation correctly (I think) conceived, is a comfortableness or satisfaction experienced by the individual so energizing, a consciousness that *all is right*, that all is natural, and as it was intended it should be—a healthful action of body, a true judgment of the intellect, and a good or virtuous effort of the will, are each applied, appropriated, and *made one's own*, not without certain definite but undefinable assurance, gladdening and encouraging, no less than in every sense fulfilling, the entire soul. To work out any such operation is to be happy—to feel (as necessarily must be felt) that it is my own energy, and so my own happiness, is to be pleased. Now it is quite obvious that many persons are (in common opinion and according to received language) happy and pleased—and that in various manners, and as a result of various and even opposite conduct; but as the words real and false must have some meaning, and so, when used as epithets to happiness or pleasure, must imply this very variety and oppositeness in those states of soul, so there cannot but be two kinds of either state—the one real, and the other false; hence, if real happiness consist in *right* use of powers and talents, internal and external, false happiness is the *wrong* use—not as such, but appearing for the time right. And again, if real pleasure be the evidence to myself of the right use, false pleasure is the evidence to myself, not of a wrong use as such, but of any wrong use, in its disguise, as if a right use. But then how comes it that this mistake prevails? Why is right accounted wrong, and evil good? Surely this is only the very probation itself of human life, the very imperfection, which forms our trial and improvement. Hence the beginning must not be the setting right our pleasures, because in that

particular point we are sure to err. No, the determining to attain not mere gratification as such, but rather happiness for itself, that is, perfection according to nature, that is the working, increasing, and thus bringing towards consummation, all our powers—the determining to attain *this* (I say,) and then *to* this directing every thing else (*τὰ λοιπά*), is the entering upon right action and right life, the acting upon principle, regardless whether pleasure comes or not. And we now see *how* pleasure is a test of *right*ness, not as the beginning but as the end, still not as the motive end; but as the unexpected (so to say) though consequent result—and we see *when* it is a test—not at first, but at last, not however as the very last finish of perfection merely, but rather again as the constantly progressing evidence of improvement; it is pain to be subduing obstacles from without, it is pleasure to *have* subdued them—it is agony to conquer in the inward struggle—it is exultation to be already conqueror—but still, as every struggle is, in the case supposed, a step acquired, an obstacle overcome—so it is at each time attended simultaneously, rather than subsecutively, by its own proper satisfaction, and so this man of effort (*ὁ σπουδαῖος, ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος*) is alone in real pleasure.

NOTE C.

Perfect virtue is self government—imperfect virtue self denial;* and in the use of these terms, as also in

* At least, some such distinction may be useful—*σωφροσύνη* and *ἐγκράτεια* are better expressed thus than by the specific and irrelevant terms, temperance and continence, usually adopted as translations equivalent to the Greek, which in fact signify two distinct branches of virtue, and not two stages of advancement in it—*ἀκρασία* and *ἀκολασία* may, for a similar reason, be rendered "self-indulgence" or "moral weakness," and "ungovernedness" or "want of principle"—How much might be gained to Moral Philosophy by exactness in translating terms.

that of "self-indulgence" and "selfishness," when spoken of as vices, is particularly seen the tendency of language, and therefore of thought, towards ascribing the identity of an individual rather to his will than to his intellect; to the mind rather as it *purposes* than as it *reflects*. And further, the use of the above and other such expressions goes to prove not merely the moral state of man, as being more peculiarly his own—but also (it would seem) the very corruptness of his will itself, and the delight it fancies to itself in disobeying the law that it feels oppressing it, with the hardship that it conceives to rest in submitting it to reason. Self-love, self-esteem, then, are not sentiments which we need fear to condemn—because, although really to love and esteem one's own happiness with whatever produces it is right and necessary, yet mankind have naturally (that is, habitually) by their appropriation to the perverse will of the term "self," sanctioned such a use of it in the dubious expression "*self-love*," as well as in the more admitted one "*self-denial*."

NOTE D.

An unceasing continuity of inhibiting and exhibiting makes up life—witness the breath, and the process of nutrition. Perception takes in to the mind what abstraction works upon, and, aided by conception, comparison, generalization and perhaps imagination, throws out the same in induction, judgment, and deduction —all this, under the class reflection, is a kind of internal exhibition (if such an expression be admissible,) of what has been already introduced to the intellect—thus likewise the *effort of will* (ὄρεξις) is the inward throwing forth of moral power; while the passive qualities of the soul are those by which it is *susceptible* of pleasure and pain; and of these two parts

every affection (*πάθος*) consists, viz: of the merely receptive, and the appetent or energetic. Now this latter need not be confounded with the extrinsic action consequent upon the *ὄρεξις*, any more than *in the intellect* an idea implies a word, a decision a statement, induction the expression of a common term in reference to its subject, or inference a syllogism. Language is the principal mode of exhibiting mind to others—applied (that is,) to the workings of intellect, it is almost the only usual and convenient mode; and it is a very important one in the communication of moral mind—and this fact, I may observe, united with one other very trite remark, strikingly displays the inseparable connection established in man between * the body, the heart, and the head. I mean that language requires the use of body acting upon matter to exhibit the previous acts of will or intellect from mind to mind. The other remark was that the corporeal senses are the only channels of inhibition either in the vegetative, or in the active, or in the reflective, life.

NOTE E.

It may be objected that I have used as opposite members of a division of human capabilities, the general and unscientific terms, "body," "heart," and "head." Of course they are only adopted popularly, as giving a concise expression to the ideas otherwise implied in *soul vegetative*, *soul practical*, *soul intellectual*—bodily powers inhere in the being of man, merely as organized and animated and so are spoken of as belonging to his body; and thus again of the heart, as the seat of will—and of the head, as the dwelling of intelligence, an analogous use of words is generally con-

* See Dialogue II. and note E.

sidered appropriate. It is remarkable, however, in the first place, that the novel system of mental physiology recently introduced, (either as confirming and illustrating, which it probably may do, the science of metaphysics, or as superseding and nullifying it, which it never can do,) it is remarkable, I say, that phrenology (as it is called) would place the moral as well as the intellectual powers within the brain, entirely diregarding the usual distinction on this point—and, secondly, it is worthy of notice that many ancient languages,* on the contrary, place not only the variously modified abilities of will, but the faculties of intelligence also, in the regions about the heart. Thus language and philosophy have borne witness to the close relation existing between body and mind, while the very disagreement I allude to shews both the ignorance of man's wisdom, and the inconclusiveness of any reasoning that would deduce from that connection the theories of a Materialist.

* Such as Hebrew, Greek, Latin.